

EXTERIOR DESIGN

Displaying the typical characteristics of Neo-Classicism, the State Capitol is bilaterally symmetrical, horizontal, formal, and dignified in its expression, and employs classical design motifs in its detailing. The 404'-7-1/2"-long front and rear facades are similar in design, as are the shorter two side facades. The long elevations feature projecting entry porticos, each with massive colonnades supporting an entablature and Greek-styled pediment. Likewise the side elevation entries are articulated by identical, classical porticos. Each of three major entrances are accessed via monumental stone stairways, the south (front) being especially impressive.

The predominant exterior material is stone: technically called quartz monzonite, a variety of granite quarried locally. As the concrete foundation walls of the basement level project above the ground, the first courses of stone are a band of massive, smooth-cut blocks that cover the exposed, upper sections of the basement level. The next horizontal stone band, placed on the exterior of the ground level walls, is of equally massive, heavily rusticated stone blocks. This single story band is terminated at the top by a simple cornice of curved and square, smooth-cut stone. The next three levels of the exterior walls are covered with smooth stone laid in stretcher bond coursing. On the east, south and west sides, the walls of the three upper levels are recessed back from the perimeter of the ground and basement floors (causing the three upper floors to have slightly less area than the two lower floors).

These upper wall recessions are articulated by tall colonnades featuring segmented, tapered stone columns with Corinthian capitals. Including the square columns (or posts) on the corners, there are thirty columns across the front (south) facade, of which eight are supporting the central, projecting portico. Across the identical east and west facades are fourteen columns, of which eight again support projecting porticos. The rear or north elevation differs from the others in its use of engaged, square pilasters on a non-recessed wall, in lieu of free-standing columns. There are twenty-eight pilasters across the elevation, eight of which are on the narrower, slightly projecting central entry portico.

Crowning the colonnades and pilasters all around the building is a tall, classical entablature topped by a heavily molded, projecting cornice. The traditional elements of ancient classicism are present, including the architrave, architrave molding and frieze (with a wreath centered over each column), all of smooth stone, in the entablature. Similarly, the cornice features bands of dentils, egg and dart, and brackets, along with crown molding—all typical of ancient Greek and Roman temples.

Gracing the top of the cornice and recessed back to the vertical plane of the walls below is a classical balustrade parapet which runs around the entire perimeter of the building, interrupted only by the sloping roofs of the entry porticos. The balustrades include massive, paneled pedestals at the corners plus smaller pedestals



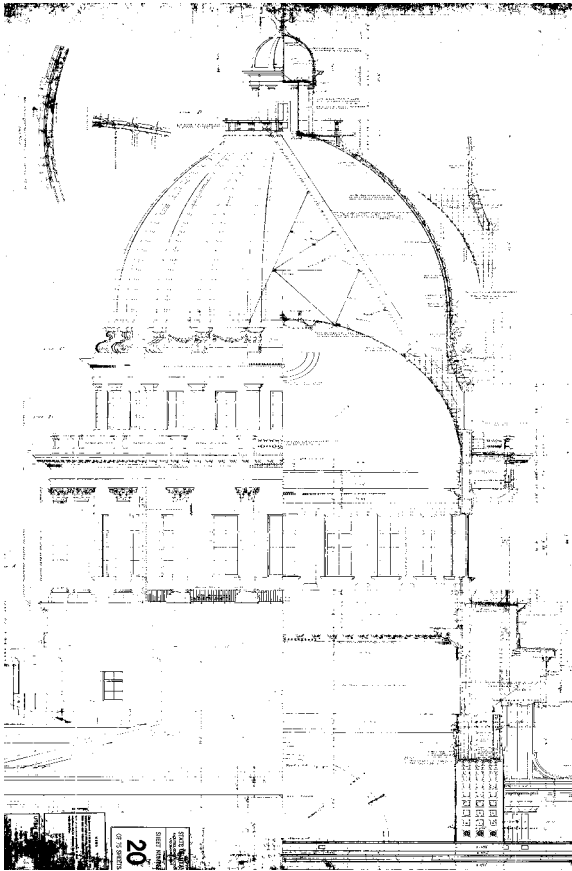
ENTABLATURE, INCLUDING
ARCHITRAVE, FRIEZE, DENTILS,
AND CORNICE



SEGMENTED GRANITE COLUMNS
AND POSTS



PARAPET BALUSTRADE MEETING ENTRY PORCH PEDIMENT



positioned over each column. In between the pedestals are stone railings supported by multi-curved balusters, all of which are standing on a small stone curb.

Counter-balancing the pervasive horizontality of the exterior composition are regularly spaced rows of tall, paired windows. The original windows have been replaced by mill-finish aluminum units which detract somewhat for the otherwise unaltered main block of the exterior. The lower level windows and basement wall penetrations are smaller and less conspicuous, and are less visually significant.

To valley viewers of the Capitol, its most distinctive and easily seen feature is its magnificent, copper-clad, hemispherical dome and its crowning cupola. The top of the cupola rises 285 feet above the main floor and 301 feet above the ground level floor. Thus the central dome is three-quarters as high as the entire building is wide. As in the nation's capitol and other Neo-Classical state capitols, the Utah State Capitol dome is designed in several tiers, each getting narrower and more detailed as the dome reaches toward the sky.

The lowest tier is the square, box-like base or pedestal that supports the lower, rounded drum wall. Both the base tier and the lower drum are sheathed in a veneer of terra cotta, colored in varieties of stippled, light-to-medium gray to imitate the stone exterior below. The square base is capped by a simple cornice which includes a plain dentil course. Similarly, the top of the lower drum wall terminates in a cornice. It has no dentils but features a crown molding. Rising directly above the lower drum wall is the primary dome colonnade with its 24 Corinthian columns. Although contemplated at one time to be veneered in matching terra cotta, these columns were instead made of concrete and plastered. The same is true of the recessed, middle drum wall and its raised window trim, segmented lintel arches, and entablature.

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"SYNERGY" PLASTER ON THE ROTUNDA DRUM

Although the original architect's final plans called for the plaster to be finished in "imitation granite," the result was apparently either unsatisfactory visually, or of poor quality physically, or both. It was covered over, most recently in 1995 with a stucco product called "Synergy," together with a silicone-based sealant. Airborne pollution readily and permanently adheres to the sealant, giving the columns, recessed dome wall and window trim their present dirty, overly-mottled, unfinished appearance. Unburdened by the new stucco and sealant are the original terra cotta balustrades, located between each of the columns, and the capitals of each column, all of which remain intact.

The colonnade and its balustrade protect a walkway which circles

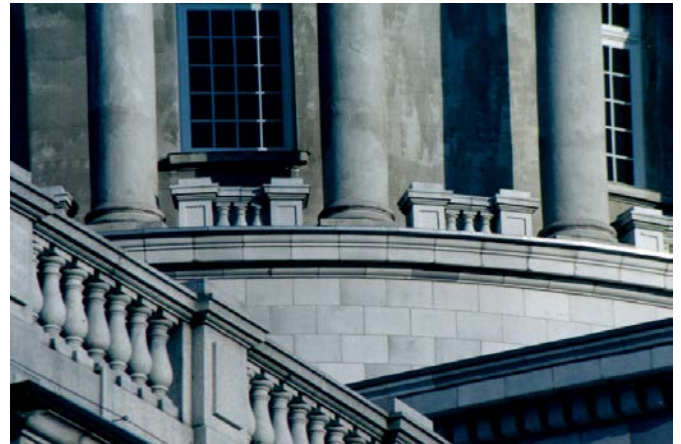
around the entire lower drum. Supported by the dome's colonnade is another massive entablature, the architrave and frieze of which are plastered, but the cornice trim of which is of terra cotta. The cornice consists of bands of dentils, egg and dart and brackets beneath an eave with a crown molding on the fascia. Above the cornice and recessed back to the plane of the entablature below is a continuous, circular balustrade similar in design to the ones below. It provides a railing for a walkway around the shorter, upper drum wall.

The upper drum wall and its engaged pilasters and window sills have been replastered with the same unsightly new plaster used on the drum and colonnade below. Between the pilasters are pairs of multi-paned windows, all shorter than the larger twenty-pane windows topped by eight-pane transom assemblies in the drum wall below. Because this upper drum wall is both shorter and recessed, it creates an illusion of even greater height. Above its pilaster is a proportionately smaller and simpler entablature and cornice, done in terra cotta, atop of which is a final, tall ornamental band of terra cotta motifs highlighting the transition between the vertical planes of the drums walls and the curvilinear dome roof above. The final band includes large, curving consoles, swags, and acanthus leaf finials, all of terra cotta.

Looming above the final, light-colored drum is the much darker, patinating copper roof, its elegant hemispherical shape curving upward to the uppermost balustrade and cupola—the final elements in the Capitol tower. Although relatively new, the copper replacement roofing is still changing colors, its lower third being dark brown with the lighter upper two-thirds slowly making the transition to its eventual light blue-green. This process will continue for decades before the final color is realized.



WHITE PAINTED METAL ON LANTERN,
ABOVE DOME



ROOF INTERSECTION OF PARAPET BALUSTRADE,



SHEET COPPER PATINIZING (OXIDIZING)
ON THE ROOF OF THE DOME

The metal dome is topped by a balustrade made of the same Utah-mined sheet copper. Its railing protects the uppermost walkway, accessible only by climbing the steep metal ladder through the center of the dome's interior. Contrasting with the dark dome roof is the stark white-painted metal cupola. It features eight metal buttresses with tall, round-arched openings between each. It is through these open-air arches that the sounds of the Capitol's carillon bells peal. Atop the buttresses is a molded copper cornice capped with white metal ball finials. The cupola has a small, hemispherical, metal roof, atop of which is a white light globe held in place by an ornamental metal frame. The light from this globe is a beacon which can be seen at night for many miles around in all directions.